

NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER,
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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October/November 2001

01-6/7



Come Join in the Revelry at the London Chapter Christmas Party!!!





Plan on attending the London Chapter's Annual Christmas Party which will be held on **December 1, 2001**.This year Chris Ellis has agreed to host the party at his apartment condo beginning at **7:30 P.M.** as it will give him an excuse to clean the place up!!



The apartment is located at **1510 Richmond St. N., Suite 515** (Buzz #148 at either the front or back entrances; left off the elevators at the fifth floor, last door on the right) in London. The building is an eight story yellow brick one located within the Wyndham Gate community, a community largely of townhouses encircled by a stone wall at the northeast corner of Richmond St. North and Windermere Avenue. The building is just northeast of the University of Western Ontario and south of Masonville Mall (northeast corner of the first set of lights after the bridge as one drives north on Richmond past the University's front gates). There are two entrances to the community **off Richmond** flanked by globe lights on pillars and if you enter by either entrance just follow the interior roadways without making any turnoffs as these will take you directly to the apartment building at the top of the hill. Most of the parking is at the rear and one can park in any outdoor space which has a "V" painted on the ground at the bottom of the space or does not have a number on a pole at the head of that space (generally the south end of the lot as one enters).







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ANNUAL RATES

Individual	$18.00
Student	$15.00
Institutional	$21.00
Subscriber	$20.00

The London Chapter continues to purr along...we had three well attended speaker nights in September, October and November with Peter Sheppard, Joe Muller and Dana Poulton respectively (25+ at each) and hope to continue this in the. We have speakers tentatively lined up for all of our January to April meetings except we need more volunteers to give short presentations at that perennial favourite in February, Members Night! So volunteers please line up and contact Chris Ellis (contact information on title page). At our October meeting Treasurer Chris Ellis reported that our finances in both our bank accounts (membership and publications) are the highest they have been in living memory so we are doing very well financially. We continue to distribute over 100 copies of Kewa to our membership. On the other hand, we will soon have to pay our annual rent to use the Museum for our monthly meetings and have not released a monograph in some time (although there are several potential ones in the works), which would lead to costs for printing outlay. There most definitely will be another monograph out or in press by the end by the end of the year (Occasional Publication of the London Chapter No. 8 which is a detailed report on the Caradoc Late Paleo-Indian site by Dellis) and if Chris Dodd ever gets around to giving us the final copy we are hopeful some Middle Woodland sites will finally be reported in print (they have been listed for over three years as the next occasional publication and people keep trying to order it!).

We have managed to get caught up with Kewa's for now but as always we need to have more articles as the hopper is very bare -- Ellis and Dodd have lamented this before and have become a broken record but with the scale of archaeological research now going on surely there must be short articles lurking somewhere that are not as difficult to extract as retrieving flint chips from a solid clay matrix using 1/8" screen!

We also need volunteers to serve on the Chapter executive. These do not involve much time, as the Chapter tends to run very well by itself. Having served in almost all executive capacities, Ellis can vouch for the fact that except for Treasurer and being Kewa editor/mailer, these do not take much time and there are some years when certain positions involve no work at all other than being consulted on chapter initiatives. In any case, we have a couple of volunteers for director and Ellis is willing to remain as Treasurer but anyone else wanting to remain on or join the executive should contact the nominating committee Chair, Christine Dodd (see cover for contact information) or a member of the nominating committee (Chris Ellis or Dana Poulton).

Instead of a December speaker night we have always had a Christmas party (except for last year). We will try again to have one this year and Chris Ellis has agreed to host this event at his condo apartment (see front for address -- yellow apartment building on top of hill in community at northeast corner of Richmond and Windermere Drive just northeast of the University of Western Ontario) on the assumption few people will show up as has been the case in the past few years!! The time is 7:30 pm, the date December 1, 2001. The London Chapter will provide the snacking foods, soft drink, coffee, etc. but you will have to BYOB and enlightening conversation. If you have any questions about directions or what to bring, please contact Chris Ellis at either (519) 858-9852 or cjellis@uwo.ca.

As a final note, it should observed that, traditionally, it is at the Christmas party that the Chapter Executive for the following year is discussed, voted on if necessary and announced. But don't let that scare you away!

SOME SITES AND ARTIFACTS I HAVE KNOWN: THE DEBERT SITE, NOVA SCOTIA

by Chris Ellis

I provide here a detailed series of measurements for a sample of fluted points from the Debert site in Nova Scotia, which was excavated in the 1960s. This site is one of the most famous of all Paleoindian fluted point sites and as such I have known of it for many year extending back to the stone age (e.g. my undergraduate years!!). Debert is well known for several reasons. It is one of the most extensively excavated of all eastern North American Paleoindian sites with the largest artifact samples. It has several reported radiocarbon dates making it the first (and still one of the very few) well-dated fluted point sites in eastern North America (averaging ca. 10,600 radiocarbon years B.P.) and one of only two fluted point sites radiocarbon dated in Canada (the other is the Charlie Lake Cave in northern British Columbia; Fladmark et al. 1988). Debert was also the subject of excellent published reports by George MacDonald (1966, 1968) based on his doctoral dissertation at Yale University and in fact, was the first large excavated fluted point site in eastern North America to be extensively described in a monograph length publication (assuming the Holcombe site points [Fitting et al. 1966] are not really fluted as claimed by Griffin [1977]).

When reported in the 1960s archaeologists knew very little about these early occupations and therefore, the potential significance of some of the recovered Debert information was not known. Indeed, one can never describe everything that might be potentially useful to other researchers so despite the high quality of the published record there are some aspects of the site and collections that are not well known or widely available. Over the past year or so I have been analyzing with John Tomenchuk and Jack Holland a series of Early Paleoindian artifacts from the Late Pleistocene Hiscock site near Rochester, New York which have been radiocarbon dated to between ca. 11,200 and 10,200 years ago B. P. (e.g. Laub 1995; Laub et al. 1988). These deposits also contain the remains of many faunal species that are not found in the area today, or anywhere else in several cases, such as mastodon and the California Condor.

Most of these artifacts from Hiscock are fluted bifaces and as part of my analyses I have been doing comparisons with fluted point assemblages from other sites, mainly in the Great Lakes drainage. Combined with evidence published elsewhere (e.g. Deller and Ellis 1992; Ellis and Deller 1997), it is becoming quite clear that there is considerable potential to improve our knowledge of the technological, cultural and age relationships of these early assemblages through detailed point comparisons often involving statistical analyses of an extensive range of characteristics. It is also clear, however, and as the Hiscock site analyses brought home to me, that for many sites, the kinds of measurements and characteristics which are of most use for these comparisons are not available or are not presented in a manner (e.g. all individual measurements) which would allow them to be incorporated into a master data base for future studies. For example, MacDonald (1968), although he provided much more data than most for the Debert assemblage, does not provide individual measurements for the Debert points and although he recognized and recorded the potential of certain characteristics such as basal concavity depth, he did not record certain characteristics such as the frequency of fish-tailed bases or degree of expansion of the lateral edges from the base ("face-angle") which more recent research indicates are of great potential importance in measuring assemblage relationships. In fact, these kinds of data are not available for many important sites in

the Great Lakes/Northeast and until they are we will continue to face roadblocks to our understanding.

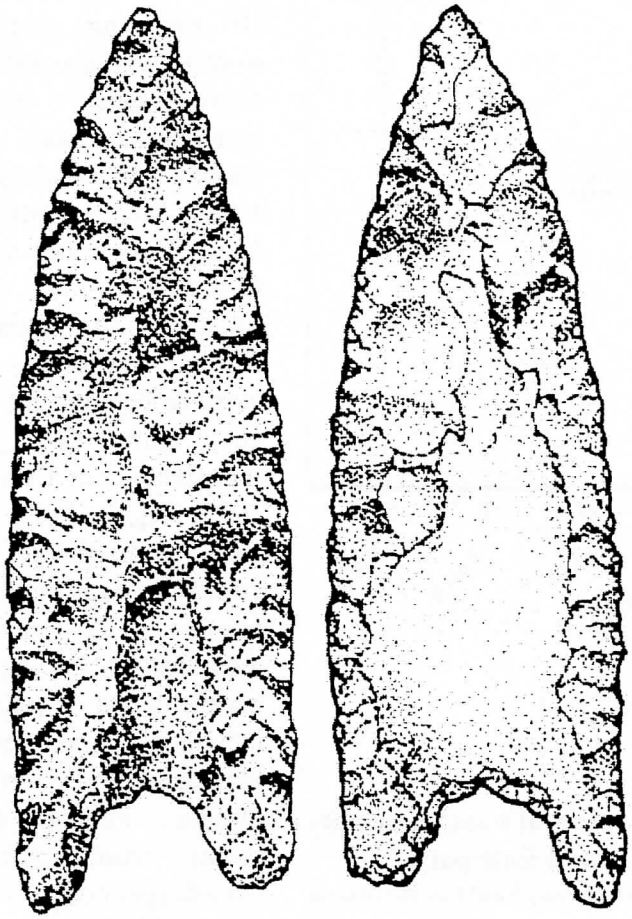


Figure 1: Fluted point from the Debert site. Reproduced courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec from MacDonald (1968: Figure 20d). Not to scale; length of point is 104.9 mm.

It just so happened that I was recently in Ottawa for other purposes but since the Debert materials are housed at the Canadian Museum Civilization in Hull, courtesy of Dr. Richard Morlan, a curator at the museum, I was able to examine and record information on as many points as possible from that site (a typical example of a fluted point from the site is shown as Figure 1). Some of the points were not in the collections examined as they were on display at the Canadian Museum of Civilization itself as well as at an exhibit in Nova Scotia. However, I was able to record varying degrees of information on 18 specimens which is a moderately large sample by the standards of these sites. Since these data are potentially of great significance I thought it worthwhile to publish them so that they are accessible to other researchers and include these data here as Table 1. On the London Chapter's web site maintained by Jim Keron and I (*www.ssc.uwo.ca/assoc/oas/index.html*) we have a number of research tools useful to archaeological researchers. Jim will be posting a downloadable version of his data base on Ontario Longhouse widths as well as programmes useful in site mapping. I have posted a downloadable SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) data file of recorded fluted point characteristics from a number of sites, especially Ontario ones, which any interested researcher can access and use. I will add the Debert data to that master file as soon as I have a chance where it will also be available for others to use and I encourage others with data on sites to submit them for inclusion.

A few comments on the Debert specimens seem useful here. I have examined a large number of fluted point collections but I was struck (not fatally) with several aspects of this assemblage. Of course, the very deep basal concavities of the points have long been remarked upon and indeed by my examination there are points with concavities as deep as 19.3 mm (!!) at Debert (MacDonald [1968] reported depths up to 15 mm but he focussed on the most complete specimens in his

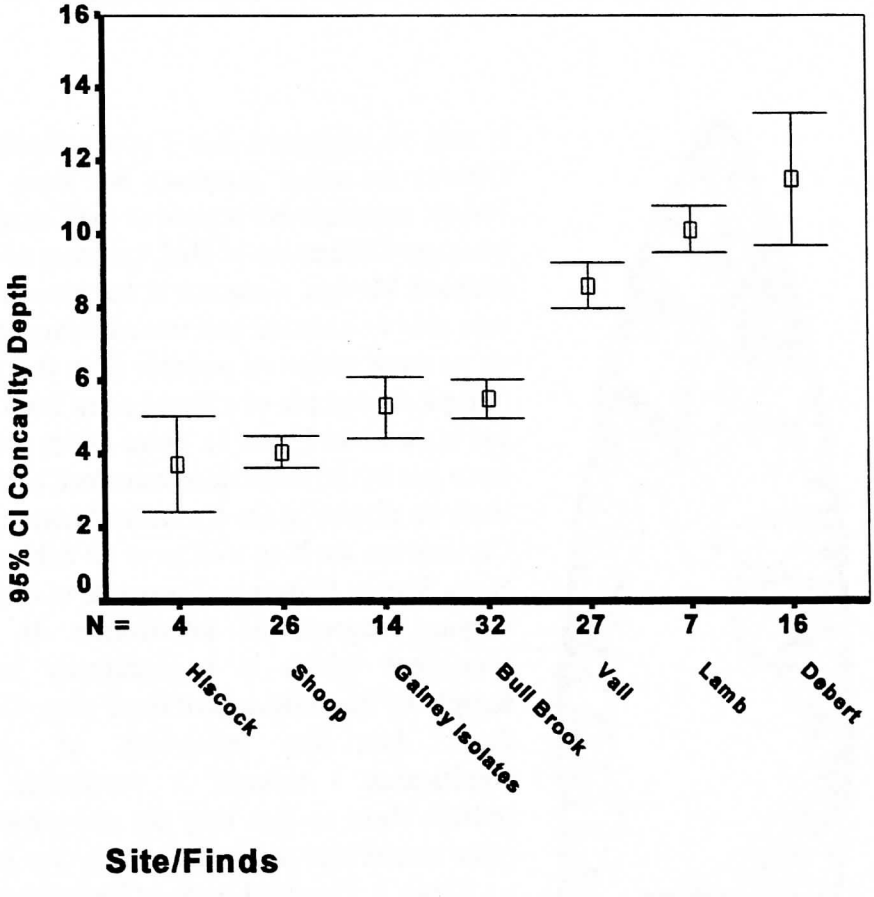


Figure 2: Mean and 95% confidence intervals of basal concavity depth for various fluted point sites and findspots.
The Gainey isolated finds are derived from various sites and localities in Ontario.

analysis). Although there are some items with shallower concavities under 9 to 10 mm and hence, overlap with specimens from some other assemblages such as Gainey in Michigan, Vail in Maine, Lamb in New York and Bull Brook in Massachusetts, Debert certainly represents an extreme beyond that of any other site yet reported (see Curran 1999: Figure 1.1). In fact, comparison of concavity depth with a number of other assemblages of large parallel-sided points including Gainey Type Isolated finds from Ontario, indicate the points from Debert have deeper concavities at a 95% confidence limit of the mean from all other sites except for Lamb, New York (Figure 2). Moreover, it was clear to me that most of the few points with shallower concavities at Debert were produced simply by reworking; that is, they were snapped tips of larger points with original deep concavities which were reworked for rehafting by chipping a shallower new concavity at the base. Field Catalogue No. 1482 which was illustrated by MacDonald (1968: Plate IVd, Vd) is a good example of an item subjected to this reworking and it has only a 4.8 mm deep concavity which stands out as very unusual at Debert (Table 1). This same item actually lacks lateral grinding for hafting and one suspects the process of reworking was not completed. In this respect it is notable that the Lamb site, the only assemblage with a concavity depth not statistically different from Debert has no such reworked items being a sample from a cache of some kind (Gramly 1999) so the Debert items, if pristine like Lamb, would probably be statistically distinct from all other samples.

Many of the points from Debert are also of a subtriangular shape with maximum width occurring at base and the side edges consistently contracting from the base toward the tip. This emphasis was

Table 1: Characteristics of Debert Site Points.*

Cat. No.	Condition	Face-Angle	Length	Width	Thick-ness	Basal Width	Concavity Depth	Grinding Length	Flute No.	Flute Length	Flute Width	Fish-tailed?	Barnes Basal Finishing?
2576	Basal Half	86					12.4					Yes	Yes-One Face
3704	Basal Half						19.3					Yes	
3226	Complete	92	55.5	27.2	9	24	7.4		1–1	25; 16.3	10.2; 9.1	No	Yes - Both Faces
E/1	Base	90		27.7	7.3				1–1	19	14.2; 16.4		Yes - One Face
E/2	Base	84		30.6		30.6	8	24.9	2–0	14.7	11.2	Yes	Yes - One Face
6115	Base			22.2	7.2				0–0				Yes - Both Faces
554	Base	89					10.1						Yes - One Face
2397	Base	87.5		33.3		33.3	13.7					No	Yes - One Face
641	Base	86.5				35.5	14.8					Yes	
120	Base	91.5		32.7	10	32.8	13.9		1–1	33.1; 29.8	12.2; 13.0	Slight	Yes - Both Faces
1183	Base	93.75		29.9		29.9	11.8					Yes	Yes - Both Faces
3893	Base	91		25.6	6.4	24.9	10	25.1; 23.1	2–1	16.2	9.9; 18.1	No	Yes - One Face
1516	Base	85		30.7	7.3	30.7	13.4	39.7; 31.0	1–0	32.2	15.7	Slight	Yes - Both Faces
1482	Complete	90.5	61.8	28.7	7.7	26.3	4.8		0–0			Slight	
1419	Complete	85			9.1		8.8	27	1–0		11.5	Slight	Yes - One Face
1302+	Base	91		32.2	11		12.2	32.7	1–1	25.5; 24.1	14.8; 15.0	Slight	Yes - One Face
1173	Complete	91.75	109.4	35.4	10.3	33.5	12.3	38.5	1–0	33.6; 13.0		No	Yes - One Face
2737	Base						11.7						Yes?

*Face-Angle refers to the degree of expansion (>90 degrees) or contraction (less than 90degrees) of the side edges of he point from a line drawn across the base at right-angles to the longitudinal point axis. It is measured at both corners (if present) and averaged per point; Flute No. refers to number of flutes per face; Flute Width refers to the total width of the fluted surface which can include more than one flute on some faces.

noted by MacDonald (1968: Table) who reported 53.8% were of this form. Half the items (8/16 or 50%) I examined had this kind of outline and this concordance suggest the sample I examined is fairly representative. More importantly, I believe that the high frequency of these items relates to the fact many are reworked snapped tips, which naturally have this kind of outline. This is more than the percentage seen at other regional sites such as Vail, Maine (Gramly 1982) where, based upon an examination of illustrated items, only 4/43 or 9.3% contract from the base (and some of those may be drills rather than points). This may suggest the site is not as closely related to Debert as Gramly (1982) argues. At the very least the high frequency suggests the Debert site represents a much more exhausted and reworked assemblage than is usually the norm.

Another unusual characteristic of the Debert assemblage was the extent of the grinding of the lateral edges. The lateral or side edges of the bases of all fluted points are purposefully ground or dulled, presumably so the edges will not cut through the binding attaching the point to a slotted shaft placed between the protruding basal ears. At Debert, and although many items were too incomplete to record exact measurements, this grinding extended up the side edges for 30 or more mm which is very extreme. This conforms to MacDonald's (1968:73) statement that grinding extends for "one-third to one-half the total point length" and no other assemblages I have examined come anywhere near this length. One suspects the extent of grinding is related to the extreme basal concavity depth. Presumably the weapon shaft had a slot cut in the end into which the points were placed with the ears extending down on either side of the shaft. The deeper the concavity the more the shaft end would extend up the face of the weapon from the basal extremities. In turn, the binding and associated edge dulling would also have to have extended an unusually long way up the sides from the base.

Other notable characteristics of the Debert points are a high percentage of points with fishtails (60%) and with the Barnes basal finishing technique (77.8%) where a short, broad expanding flake is removed over the base of the main flute on one or both faces (see Roosa 1965). The frequency of fishtails again seems unusual versus other regional sites like Vail. Based on photographs (Gramly 1982) only 16/42 or 38.1% of the Vail points are fishtailed. It also is unusual versus other northeastern sites with quite deep concavities such as Lamb where only 2 of 10 or 20% have such a feature and when present the characteristic is so slight to be non-existent versus the pronounced fishtails seen on many Debert items. MacDonald (1968:78) had noted the use of the Barnes finishing technique on the Debert bases in his report but I had not realized how common it was in the assemblage. It is present on almost every point and only point forms such as the Gainey and Barnes types from the Great Lakes region seem to have comparable frequencies to what is seen at Debert.

A final characteristic which struck me was the fact the points are not well fluted and many faces lack flutes entirely (54.6% lack flutes on one or both faces and 18.2% have no flutes at all; this conforms to MacDonald's [1968:72] statement that "20 per cent are unfluted" again suggesting the sample examined is representative) and instead only have, in most cases, the Barnes basal finishing flake removals. In fact, what at first examination appeared to be the widest and longest fluted face in the assemblage (MacDonald 1968: Figure 20d; reported here as Figure 1, right view) turned out upon closer perusal to not be a flute at all but simply a flat surface of the flake on which the point was made – the knapper had simply edged around a flat surface to give the appearance of fluting. One other point I examined also had a pseudo flute. These pseudo flutes have been reported from other

assemblages (e.g. Roosa and Deller 2000:77; Wilmsen and Roberts 1978: Figure 110) but their presence at Debert had not been noted. Characterizing how good fluting is, especially using measures such as lengths of flutes, is notoriously difficult (Roosa and Deller 2000:78-79) but the Debert items do seem short-fluted for the most part. One suspects that this might be due to raw material quality as the flawed brecciated chalcedony used for many examples at the site would be very difficult to flute. Moreover, since many of the items are snapped tips which were reworked for rehafting by flaking a new base, unless the point was extremely long fluted to begin with any flute segments left on the reworked tip would be quite short or absent altogether. Indeed, the snapped tip alluded to earlier which was in the process of being worked into a new point (MacDonald 1968: Plates IVd, Vd) did not have any flutes at all.

Overall, I am impressed by the uniqueness of the Debert assemblage. Although the points are clearly related at some level to those from other sites like Vail or Lamb (and one could add the Gainey site in Michigan), I would be cautious about jumping to the conclusion that they are the same things as those other sites as is usually assumed. It is possible that the differences such as frequency of subtriangular forms relate simply to differences in how exhausted and reworked a discarded assemblage happens to be but other differences such as concavity depth, high frequency of fishtails and extent of lateral grinding are not so easy to explain.

Acknowledgements: A sincere thanks goes out to Dr. Richard Morlan, Curator of Paleoenvironmental Studies, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization for allowing me access to the Debert site materials. The Museum also kindly allowed me to reproduce a drawing of the Debert points from George MacDonald's report as Figure 1 here and I greatly appreciate this courtesy. I also thank Dick Laub and Brian Deller for allowing me to view and collect data on other fluted point collections.

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"TALES OF A RIVER" : OUR VANISHING PAST ALONG THE SYDENHAM RIVER

David Riddell, Strathroy Middlesex Museum

Around ten years ago, I moved from the London area to live in an old farmhouse near Alvinston, Ontario. I was drawn to this region because of its 'remote' nature, where a certain stretch of road in particular, bordering the Sydenham River, is home to a number of abandoned 19th century structures. Aside from the surrounding agricultural development that has occurred since then, many of these buildings have simply been allowed to stand as they were left. I was (and continue to be) also drawn to the archaeological potential here. As I basically grew up in Strathroy and spent a good deal of my youth walking fields in the area in search of artifacts, it seems natural that I return here to learn more about the more recent history of the region.

The upshot of it all is that an exhibit has evolved (or to be more accurate, is evolving), where I have selected certain of these abandoned sites along the Sydenham drainage, prepared some photographs and located some old ones in the Museum archives, and conducted some introductory background research on the history of these structures. A guiding 'principle' here is the river, as an early link between communities and a source of industry, and I have tried to select a diverse sample of buildings and sites. It should be kept in mind that this is a sample only, and by no means an inventory of historical structures along the river. Additionally, at least to begin with, I have chosen a section of the river from around its headwaters to "Smith Falls", or the Shetland area.

It strikes me that we are fortunate to witness a number of these structures from the 19th century still standing (leaning in some cases), and discover some of the many tales that they have to tell. Another guiding principle is time. Time has become a precious commodity, and few of us these days seem to have enough of it. The long abandoned structures and areas, which I have selected here, show us where time has 'slowed'; where, in the aftermath of the pace of change itself, the 'dust' has been allowed to settle, and accumulate ... with nature's constant reminder of our impermanence.

It is also about connections and community ... and though we have world-wide links at our fingertips now, perhaps the 'strands' of our 'webs' are more diffuse than those of the past(s) portrayed here, because we have so many of them, and again, not enough time to do each one of them justice. And like archaeologists, we have more 'layers' to 'sift' through when attempting to access our shared and separate histories.

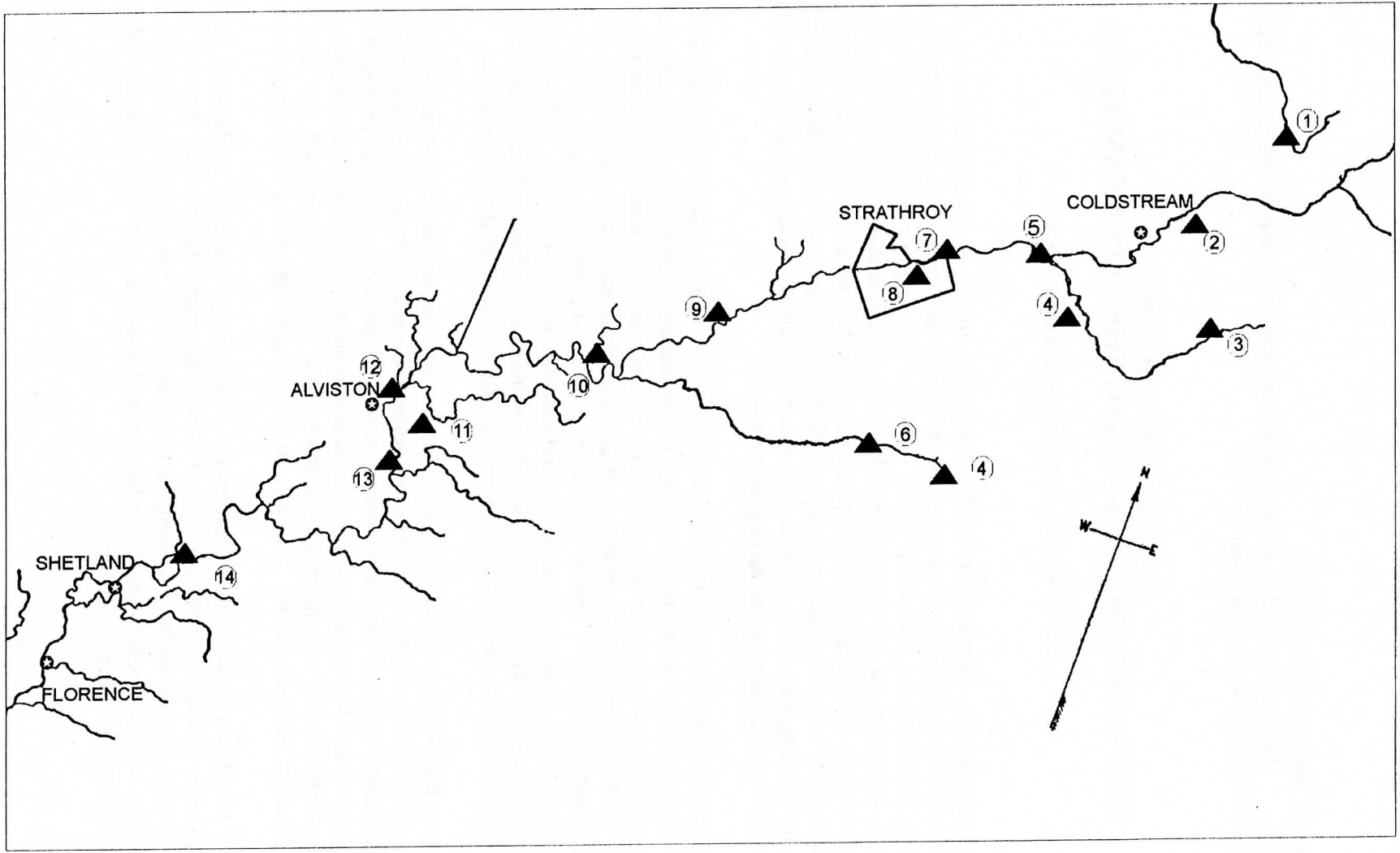


Figure 1. Location of Points of Interest

I believe that the past can teach us about connecting to the land, to ourselves, to our communities, and to the descendants of the First Nations peoples who lived here before Europeans arrived. With these thoughts in mind, I will turn to the structures and areas in question. I will begin near the "headwaters" of the Sydenham River, and proceed downstream. Locations for the points of interest described in this article are illustrated in Figure 1.

#1 DUNCRIEF (Lobo Township)

The building pictured in Figure 2 (adorned with a plaque and new shutters), believed to be a family dwelling and perhaps associated with the mill, is a reminder of this once thriving community. A large footing section a mill/dam is located on the other side of the road. The mill was actually located on a tributary of the Ausable River, but is also very close to the Sydenham headwaters, and is a good example of a milling community in this region during the 19th century.

The name "Duncrief" and other settlers' names in the area reflect the Scottish immigration. The first sawmill here was built in 1835, followed by a flour mill a few years later. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1895, but was rebuilt shortly thereafter with much community support, and a dance was held in the new structure in celebration. Finally, around 1910, with business declining anyway, the dam washed out (apparently a recurring scenario) and the mill was torn down. The low volume of water passing through the creek today due to the general lowering of the water table leaves one to imagine the stream that was able to power the large mill wheel.

The Duncrief store/post office was in operation from 1862 to 1913. The 'postman' gives us an indication of community and what was considered payment for his work in those days: ***"Mr. Stewart did not seem to have a regular fee for delivering our mail, but once a year would call and pick up two bags of oats and a few turnips as his pay"*** (Ghost and Post Offices of Ontario, by F. Carter; Duncrief: 1835-1920, by C.R. Charlton, 1970).

#2 SUGAR SHACK (Coldstream, Lobo Township)

The collapsed "sugar shack" located on the Carmichael farm near Coldstream is an example of the type of structure used over a lengthy period, from the mid 19th century onwards. Large hinged doors in the roof allowed steam to escape from the massive kettles. A large amount of wood would have to be cut from the surrounding bush to keep the sap boiling. Families in the area carry on the maple syrup making industry today, with some modern improvements.

The technique of sap gathering and sugar making in the "new world" may have been derived from the First Nations peoples in the area at the time. The Ojibway were known to have specific 'sugaring areas' along "Bear Creek", as the early settlers knew it. The evolution of the naming of the Sydenham is an interesting case in itself; known to the Ojibway as "Jonquakamik", meaning "River of Milk", adopted as "Bear Creek" after the chief of the Bear Creek group, and finally fully "Euro-Canadianized" by Lord Sydenham.

The windmill located beside the sugar shack is, according to Davis, "characteristic of mills in this area. Starting about 1890, patented windmills were imported or copied from American designs"



(Sketches of Lobo, by R. Davis and R. Nickles, 1976).

#3 GOLD CREEK LOG CABIN (Lobo Township)

The cabin illustrated in Figure 3 was moved from the fifth concession of Caradoc Township in 1966, and was apparently part of the John Tunks family history. This example is a testament to the durability of the mainstay of pioneer shelter in the 19th century.

Log cabin construction in Upper Canada was adopted from the Swedes who settled in Delaware in the eastern United States, and the structure was easily adaptable to the North American frontier. The basic design was one room with several activity areas, and subsequent variations became more elaborate. Designs and floor plans were also specific to the ethnic group residing in them (The Log Cabin, by A. Bealer and J. Ellis, 1976).

The following excerpt from "A Settler's Autobiographical Sketch" by C.W. Humphries gives us a glimpse of life in a pioneer cabin: ***"The first years at this raw, bush covered farm were extremely difficult. According to one of the daughters, porridge was their only food for some periods up to a week in length. Simpson would often carry a bushel of wheat thirty miles to London and bring back flour. Fires were made by striking a jack-knife on steel and catching the sparks on a piece of wool substance; and when all else failed, live coals had to be brought half a mile from a neighbour's house. The family slept on beds of rope and equipped with straw mattresses. The huge open fireplace on one side of the cabin provided both the means of heating and cooking."***

#4 THE CAMPBELL CEMETERIE(S) (Caradoc Township)

At least two cemeteries in Caradoc contain the interments of related members of the Campbell 'clan', amongst others. The Campbells were one of the early pioneer families in Middlesex, and their presence was prominent enough to result in two 'enclaves' of Campbells; one located on the fifth concession of Caradoc ("Glen Oak"), and the other in north Lobo Township. A newspaper article of several decades ago recounts two members of the initial Campbell immigration arriving at "Crows Flats" near Komoka, and "making their first acquaintance with the Indians ... prior to staking out their claims" (Cemeteries of the Campbells Middlesex Pioneer Links, by Myrtle E. Home, n.d.). The article goes on to note how these cemeteries are located on similar landscapes, i.e., high sandy knolls beside a creek – " a constant reminder of the tiny mountain burns of their native land" (Scotland).

Many of these locations were favourable for other settlement of an older past as well (whether burial or subsistence related), notably First Nations groups, as archaeologists often find evidence of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal groups juxtaposed or 'layered' together. There are also symbolic choices of the land for burials, in addition to practical considerations such as drainage; the higher land such as a knoll being in closer proximity to the 'heavens', and the head of the graves/tombstones facing the west towards the setting sun for the departing souls (particularly amongst First Nations peoples). We can see also that nature has taken its toll on the gravestones and the grounds of these cemeteries in particular, and are reminded that ultimately we all return to the land.

#5 SITE OF THE VILLAGE OF AMIENS (1824/25) (Caradoc/Lobo Townships)

There once stood a productive little community on the banks of the Sydenham River north of Strathroy, on the Lobo-Caradoc township line. This community, known as Amiens, was initiated through land grants to several veterans of the War of 1812, most of who were 'part-time', or absentee landholders. These veterans created the impetus for other settlers to follow. One of these veterans in particular was instrumental in the formation of the community. This was a "Captain Marvel White;" the name itself conjuring up images of a comic book hero.

Captain White, in addition to being listed as a road commissioner for London District in 1830, was also a schoolteacher and perhaps ironically, a tavern owner in the latter years of the settlement. The tavern was located on one corner of what is now the Ilderton sideroad and the Lobo/Caradoc township road, while a store/post office was situated on the opposite diagonal corner (where the "Pioneer" sign and farm buildings now are).

Amiens, like most communities in the 19th century was located along a watercourse for good reason. The mill for the settlement was located just downstream from the 'bulk' of the village, and the old race channel is still visible in the picturesque pasture valley. A new transportation corridor, what is now Egremont Road or Highway # 22, bypassed the community, like many that disappeared. Unlike other villages however, Amiens was somewhat unique in that it simply relocated to another locale(s) in Lobo Township (closer to what is now Hickory Corners) next to the new road. The 1864 Middlesex "Gazeteer" lists this location as a "flourishing village," with several shop/mill owners. 1913 is listed as the closing date for the final Amiens post office, which had moved several times prior to this (Amiens Village and Post Office by A. B. Ward, 1985).

#6 THE PINCOMBE MILLS

The Pincombe family played an instrumental role in the development of Strathroy. The family has a lengthy history of milling, and since mills were the most important industry in the early communities, it is noteworthy that generations of the Pincombe family were involved in the mills, not only Strathroy, but also in Napier and Alvinston.

A cement footing from the dam of that first mill in Strathroy still remains on the mill pond island, on the former Buchanan property, the acknowledged 'founder' of the town. The mill race ran alongside the island, and early photographs of the mill pond gives us an idea of how the environment has changed over time.

It is through such a history that we can gain an appreciation of the ties that existed between communities along the Sydenham River, and across township and county boundaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. The 'first' Richard Pincombe learned his trade at the mill in Napier (1857), then purchased Cook's grist mill in Strathroy in 1860, where the mill pond and conservation area now exist. Richard negotiated the purchase and movement of the then modern steam powered flour mill from Alvinston to Strathroy (1879). To accomplish this, he had to secure a $10,000 loan from the town fathers (a story in itself). This mill was located on the site where the canning factory was

subsequently situated, and augmented the production of the initial "chopping mill." The next location of the mill was where the current Strathroy flour mills stand today on Albert and Metcalfe Streets.

#7 STRATHROY CNR TRAIN STATION

Abandoned as a passenger facility for about two decades now, this, the second train station, was built in 1887 at a cost of $9,000. This station is located some 80 feet to the east of the original station, which was on the Frank farm property (Strathroy [Red Valley] by C.R. Cox, 1936). After years of neglect, the building is definitely showing it's age. The architectural style is similar to that of the Glencoe CN (then the Grand Trunk Railway) station, which was built around 1890, and is now restored.

There was apparently much negotiating over the location and building of the first railway station in Strathroy. The original route of the Great Western Railway would have bypassed the town altogether in order to avoid the river flats and flooding, and the station was at one point going to be located on the Rapley farm two miles west of town, before John Frank came to the rescue. This location prompted a general westward shift in the expansion of the town (Strathroy, It's Businesses and Industries 1832-1978, by Kiel et al., 1978).

#8 GLEN OAK CHURCH (Caradoc Township)

This lovely little country church is actually still used in the summer for weekly services. Prior to its construction in 1914, Methodists held their services in the school across the road. Mr. Howe, whose farm comprised the surrounding property, donated the land for the church. "This building was a community project as everyone donated both money and labour. Costs were $2943 to erect and decorate the beautiful little church. It became Glen Oak United in 1925, and is now closed" (History of Caradoc 1967).

From Selena J. (Howe) Trott we get a glimpse of the community (courtesy of Brian Mitchell): ***"On each corner was a building – school - church – also post office and a shed for the purpose of sheltering horses and buggies while the people attended church and many social evenings (no such thing as cars then). The young people around especially the girls were known as 'swamp angels'".***

#9 KATESVILLE (Cemetery) (Metcalfe Township)

The following is a quote from the report of the Cemetery Board, County of Middlesex, 1952 concerning the condition of the cemetery: ***" Condition is deplorable. Not fenced and cattle running over ground. According to residents, cemetery has not been used for ten years or more."***

The report goes on to state: ***" Apparently no cemetery records exist and all stones are now gone, crumbled to dust, as local farmers took them to pave their barnyards and pigpens. When conditions were brought to the attention of the authorities, official steps were taken to make the perpetrators clean up the cemetery grounds and grass it over. It is now well kept though there are***

several tobacco barns on it."

The village of Katesville itself, according to the 1864-65 "Middlesex Gazeteer", had a population of about 175, with several churches, a school, a hotel, and several craftspeople including a carriage and wagon maker, blacksmith, and potter. Richardson's Pottery was a noted manufacturer in the area, and the debris from the brick kiln is still in evidence in a cultivated field several kilometres distant. The craft industry in Katesville is continued to this day by "Katesville Woodcraft" shop.

#10 NAPIER GENERAL STORE (Metcalfe Township)

Napier itself took shape as a 'dual' community around 1830; part was composed of Gaelic- speaking Scots, and the other settled by retired English army and naval officers. The two groups apparently tended to keep their distance; nonetheless, they utilized many of the same services offered by the growing community throughout the 19th century. An interesting note on ethnic relations in the 19th century is provided by Ondaatje: ***In a pattern that was to become a familiar one throughout the province, wherever the two met, the Scots made life difficult for the Irish. "Dirty Irish," the Scots' clergy ranted in church, "fit only to be hewers of wood and carriers of water, servants to thine own appointed 'heeland' Scots." Hewers of wood they were, to an extent that the Irish became the architect-builders of the province (Old Ontario Houses by K. Ondaatje, 1977).***

The early years of community building saw many hardships, foremost of which was often putting food on the table. Fortunately, the existing residents were willing to lend a hand: ***" Nature hit the community hard that year of 1832 ... They would have starved to death if the Indians, who were friendly, hadn't shown them what to eat from the forest, ..."*** (A History of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Napier and the Gaelic Settlement, 1963).

One of these services was of course a mill – a rather elaborate one for that time (1838), with steam power and four stories, and huge millstones brought from Scotland. The first miller was, coincidentally, Richard Pincombe, father of Richard who founded the flour mills in Strathroy.

Another central focus of this, and any community in its early years was the general store and post office, illustrated in Figure 4. "Napier House" came into being in 1872 and was operated by the Sutherlands, proprietors for 40 years. The store itself served the community for 98 years, till 1970. Ruth Merrick's (daughter of J.G. Sutherland) recollections of the store activities are recounted in "Napier Remembered", by The Medway Valley News, 1991.

#11 BROOKE AND MOSA UNION SCHOOL

As the name implies, this common one room schoolhouse is situated on the Brooke (Lambton County) and Mosa (Middlesex County) Township Boundary. Interestingly, Brooke Township petitioned to become a part of Middlesex County in the mid 19th century, but was denied. Nonetheless, integral connections remained between communities on either side of the county line, specifically the milling connection between Alvinston, Napier and Strathroy (The Shaping of Middlesex by D. J. Brock, 1990).



Figure 4. The Napier Post Office

The "Maple Ridge School," as it was known, opened its doors to students in 1899. The school was constructed for $ 1,092, "including shades for the windows and a stove." The first teaching master was a W. R. Fleming who was paid $ 235 per year. The school was apparently still in operation in 1936, when as recorded by the Brooke Women's Institute, the present board of trustees is listed (Brooke Township History by the Brooke Women's Institute, 1936).

Included in the Brooke Township History is an interesting commentary on encounters with the First Nations peoples at that time: ***"The Indians who roamed over the original wilderness of forest and stream could in no way be considered residents of any particular township or county. Most of them had been placed on the so-called Indian Reserves about the year 1827. Numbers of them, however, continued for many years to wander over their favourite hunting ground. They were generally friendly with the white men and often entered into trade and barter with them."***

#12 GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL (Alvinston)

Alvinston has always been well represented by hotels, despite its size. The Michigan Central Railroad provided the impetus for several of these in the 1870s, to the point where there were supposedly six hotels in operation at one time. Two of the 'survivors' into the 1990s are the Grand Central and the Columbia Tavern. The Grand Central was shut down and boarded up in the mid 'nineties, and the Columbia continues as a popular entertainment facility to this day.

The Grand Central Hotel was built in 1882, while the Columbia Tavern was erected in 1893. Angus McLean states ***"For many years these hotels had large sheds in the rear in which the farmers could rest their horses while they did their business about town"*** (Reflections of a Century by A. McLean, 1880-1980). Of course these hotels were much more than 'watering holes' in the early days, providing lodging to travelers from stage coach and railway.

#13 GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY TRESTLE ("Shields Siding," Brooke Township, Lambton)

In the early 1870s, there was a boom in railway construction throughout southern Ontario. Alvinston was fortunate enough to be serviced by two lines: The Michigan Central and the Great Western; the latter amalgamated with the Grand Trunk in 1882. The Grand Trunk line operated as a second main line from Glencoe to Kingscourt east of Sarnia, where salt was being mined. Other major resources being extracted and shipped by rail at this time were lumber and oil, with the oil fields located in the nearby Oil Springs area. Oak barrels produced at the staving mill in Alvinston were shipped to Jamaica's rum factories. Prior to the advent of railway freight, the Sydenham River served as a conduit for floating timber down to various mills (Railways of Lambton County, by C. Andreae, 1986).

The monolith-like trestle abutments serve as reminders that even the advents of change are subject to change itself. This structure was obviously built to last, and the massive hewn limestone blocks would have been brought in by rail, perhaps from an escarpment area quarry. The rest of the structure was likely salvaged to be put to use elsewhere. They are indeed the gravestones of the railway here, although with a little imagination, they could be thought of as the remains of some ancient civilization. The line has been abandoned for several decades now.

#14 SMITH FALLS (Euphemia Township, Lambton)

This region serves as a suitable 'end point' for this survey of abandoned structures along the Sydenham, for it is here where we find a proliferation of 'ruins.' It is as though this area was left behind when the pace of progress became too great, or perhaps simply 'slipped through the cracks' of time, and was caught in between regions of development. Whatever the case, as one follows the winding Smith Falls Road which follows the winding river itself, one encounters a number of still standing (albeit some barely), 19th century buildings.

Several of these homes are of the mid-19th century "Gothic Revival"style (Old Ontario Houses by K. Ondaatje, 1977), and the house in Figure 5 is a fine example of the style. It stands on land once occupied by T.F. Purdy (according to the 1870 Census) and later (1901), by the Munroe family. The Munroe family history reads as many do from the early years of immigration to Canada (Euphemia Township History, 1998). Many of these early tracts of land were held by The Canada Company, a group of wealthy British businessmen who acquired land from the Crown and subsequently leased the land to settlers. Such was the case of the above example, and often the settlers were required to move out after making considerable improvements on the land, because they could not in the end meet the terms of the lease (History of the Canada Company, by T. Coleman, 1975).

Significantly, the Smith Falls area was to become home to an enclave of black slave refugees from the United States in the mid 19th century. Their burial grounds apparently in the vicinity but unmarked. A magnificent grove of Kentucky coffee trees planted along the roadside is perhaps symbolic of their time here. An anonymous commentary from the early 20th century (and remember to keep this in the context of the times) recalls one of the residents of this community: ***" Darky Evans, an intelligent Negro, who lived at Smith's Falls in Euphemia, followed the trades of whitewashing, lecturing and local preaching and was also known by the farmers as a helper for the threshing outfits"*** (Reflections of a Century by A. McLean, 1880-1980). Evidence of First Nations settlements abounds in the area; the rapids here in the river would have been a favoured fish spearing site.

It was here also that the initial land surveyor of Dawn, Euphemia and Brooke townships in Lambton (1821), Samuel Smith, established his home and mills at Smith Falls. Here the Devonian period shales are exposed in the river bed, creating the first rapids on its winding journey down to Lake St. Clair. These limestone beds were quarried for local construction, and the 'falls' were supposedly more of a falls way back when. Indeed, one can get an idea of the change in environment surrounding the river over time by viewing some of the old photographs of the late 19th century, depicting extensive use of the riverbank area. As with many of the mills in the 19th century, Samuel Smith's were the victims of fire. A passage in the Sarnia paper of 1856 describes the event.

CONCLUSIONS

The 'history in a nutshell' of selected abandoned 19th century structures located along the Sydenham River drainage will, I hope, serve as a catalyst for a more thorough study of settlement in this region. The outreach exhibit "Tales of a River" which is being circulated by the Strathroy Middlesex

Museum to communities located along the Sydenham River, is designed as a means of raising awareness of our heritage resources, and the crucial role that river systems played in the settlement of the land. Future plans are to expand the format of this exhibit in order that it may be housed at the Wallaceburg Museum and Strathroy Middlesex Museum. Included in this format will be an elaboration of the history of the Ojibwa peoples' settlement along the river, thanks to networking with the Chippewa of the Thames community, and will also entail the portrayal of other First Nations settlement.

My attachment and bias to this region is obvious. The landscape is rife with structures, and the landscape itself, for that matter, conveys and conjures memories of a distant past somewhere in my own ancestry. Perhaps what makes this area so near and dear to me, particularly that area near Alvinston mentioned in the beginning, is the slower pace of change which has resulted in many of the structures noted still standing. Certainly, those of us who are or have been in the consulting business are used to the rapid pace of change associated with development, in whatever form encountered. Those in the business obviously depend on a steady pace of development for their survival. In this case, however, it is refreshing to find a region of southern Ontario that has escaped development to a large extent, other than the usual agricultural encroachment. When I am in this region I find that there is still time for reflection and continual opportunities to view landscapes and structures as they change and decay relatively 'naturally'; a sort of 'living museum'.

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